



Formerly Used Defense Sites Environmental Investigations at the Former Naval Air Station and Naval Air Technical Training Center Norman, Oklahoma

In 1986, Federal legislation established provisions for the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (the Corps) to perform environmental restoration activities at properties formerly controlled or used by the Department of Defense (DoD). The Formerly Used Defense Sites (FUDS) program involves thousands of sites throughout the United States. While every site is unique, each project focuses on four elements:

- Building Demolition and Debris Removal
- Ordnance and Explosive Debris
- Hazardous, Toxic, and Radiological Waste
- Potentially Responsible Party Investigations

The FUDS program provides restoration related only to DoD-generated pollution that occurred before the property was transferred to private owners, or to other Federal, State, or local government owners.

The former Norman Naval Air Station (NAS) and Norman Naval Air Technical Training Center (NATTC) were identified as FUDS, so the Corps evaluated these sites through the FUDS program. The Corps has involved the City of Norman, the University of Oklahoma (OU), the Oklahoma Department of Environmental Quality (ODEQ), private parties, and the public in this process.

History of the Former Norman Naval Air Station (NAS)

Max Westheimer Flying Field was established by OU as a civilian pilot operation. DoD use of the

NAS began in 1942 when the Navy began leasing the 270-acre airfield. The Navy then purchased additional land, creating a total of approximately 1,650 acres that then became the NAS.

At the NAS, the Navy directed an enlisted boot camp and primary flight training. In 1942, the U.S. Marines assigned a Reserve Unit to the NAS and Marine enlistees attended boot camp there. The aircraft assigned to the NAS during WWII included N2S Stearmans, Ryan NR Recruits, and Spartan NPs.

The NAS was in operation until March 1946. In 1948, the Navy surrendered the lease on the Max Westheimer Flying Field to OU, which now



Location of NATTC and NAS in Norman, Oklahoma.

operates the airfield as a general aviation, reliever airport. The remaining property was deeded to OU.

This former NAS is now known locally as the North Base. Current ownership of the former NAS property is divided among the OU and a limited liability corporation in which the main partner is the OU Foundation, a private entity.

Current site activities on the former NAS include the Max Westheimer Airport, a City of Norman fire

station and training center, OU storage and general use, and Interstate 35 and associated frontage roads. Additionally, a portion of the site has recently been purchased by the OU Foundation and will be further developed, privately, in the near future.



1952 Aerial photograph of NAS.

History of the Former Norman Naval Air Technical Training Center (NATTC)

DoD use of the NATTC began in June 1942, when the United States government acquired approximately 1,420 acres by condemnation. The site was active during two periods: 1942 through 1946 and 1952 through 1959.

The mission during the 1942 through 1946 period was to train mechanics, ordnancemen, metalsmiths, rubberized equipment repairmen, and radar and line maintenance crews. Ordnance training included small arms, aviation ordnance, explosives and ammunitions, pyrotechnics, and loading, sighting, and firing of aircraft guns. Ranges were constructed to provide some of this training, and some of the training occurred in a classroom. The Aviation Ordnanceman course also included chemical warfare protection and decontamination training. The Navy also constructed a hospital on the installation.

The mission during the 1952 through 1959 period was primarily to train aviation machinists, aviation mechanics, and airmen. The airmen training was basic and was used to evaluate new recruits' future training assignments.

In 1961, a total of approximately 620 acres was transferred to the OU, and approximately 430 acres

was transferred to private ownership. Since this time, an additional 205 acres has been conveyed to OU, and the remaining land has been conveyed to various other parties, including the U.S. Department of Health, Education, and Welfare (HEW) and the City of Norman.

The former NATTC is now locally known as the South Base. Current ownership of the former NATTC property is divided between OU and Yamanouchi Pharmaceutical Company (formerly Shaklee).

Current site activities on the former NATTC include use of the OU campus and day-to-day activities at the Yamanouchi complex. In the near future, OU also intends to partner with the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration to develop a large weather center on the site.



1952 Aerial photograph of NATTC.

Site Summary

The NAS and NATTC investigations included the following activities:

- Completing historical research at various archives and records-holding facilities,
- Reviewing aerial photography,
- Interviewing people associated with the sites, and
- Conducting site inspections to determine, to the extent possible, the locations of ordnance usage,

the type and extent of ordnance usage, and any evidence of ordnance usage remaining on the NAS or NATTC property.

This research addressed ordnance activities only during the period of DoD ownership/control, and the site inspections were visual only. Soil exploration was not within the scope of the work performed. Both site investigations are discussed in more detail below.

NAS Site Visit: A site inspection was performed on 7 April 1999 by the Corps. The inspection focused on five former ordnance-related structures or activities. Results of the site inspection are summarized below:

- *Skeet range:* Only the range house foundation and the firing positions remain.
- *Machine gun and rifle range:* The berm, known locally as "Mount Williams," is still intact but is less than half its original size as a portion was removed to construct I-35. All three of the firing lines are still visible, and each is a concrete slab with five gun mounts cast into the concrete.
- *Small arms magazine:* Only the concrete slab remains.
- *Ready magazine:* This had been removed and replaced by an aircraft maintenance structure.
- *Indoor rifle range and armory:* The structure still exists as it was originally built, but is now used by the OU Art Department for storage.

No ordnance was found during the site inspection. The site inspection team concluded it is unlikely that ordnance contamination is present on the site.

NATTC Site Visit: A site inspection was performed on 7 April 1999 by the Corps. The inspection focused on several former ordnance-related structures or activities. Results of the site inspection are summarized below:

- *Machine gun range and small arms magazine:* Located on the former Shaklee (now Yamanouchi) property, the area was not inspected because permission could not be obtained.
- *Skeet range and ammunition magazines:* Only the foundations and the firing positions remain.

- *Ammunition storage structures:* One structure was removed for construction of the basketball arena. A second structure was removed for construction of Highway 9. All that remains of the third structure is the foundation.
- *Aircraft bore firing ranges:* One range was removed for the construction of Highway 9. The berm and firing position for the second range are still intact.
- *Machine gun test firing building:* The building has been removed. The berm that surrounded the building is still intact.
- *Arsenal:* The building has been removed and the area is now part of the practice area for the OU golf course.

An area along the extreme southern border of the property was identified as an area where pyrotechnic and explosives training may have also occurred. However, this was not confirmed by interviews or by the site inspection.

No ordnance was found during the site inspection. The site inspection team concluded it is unlikely that ordnance contamination is present on the site.

Preliminary Conclusions: Following completion of the site visits, an Archive Search Report was prepared for both the former NAS and NATTC. Based on historical document reviews, interviews, and site visits, the Corps concluded no further action was required for ordnance-related issues at either site.

Future Activities: Based on the conclusion that no further action is required at the NAS or NATTC for ordnance-related issues, no further activities are anticipated.

Public Involvement

Public involvement is an integral part of this project, as the FUDS program requires the Corps to take steps that ensure the public is informed and encourages public input into the decision-making process. A Public Information Meeting will be held and technical documents associated with the Corps work will be made available for public review at the Norman Public Library and the Western History Collections at University of Oklahoma.

The Corps will be conducting a Public Information Meeting on 9 November 2004 to notify the public of the ordnance study findings. The meeting will be at the Norman Fire Station No.7 Training Center. The Corps is also requesting public comments on this study, which will be accepted up to 30 days following the public meeting.

The public is encouraged to ask questions and make comments throughout the process. These will become part of the public record. Please contact by mail or phone:

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